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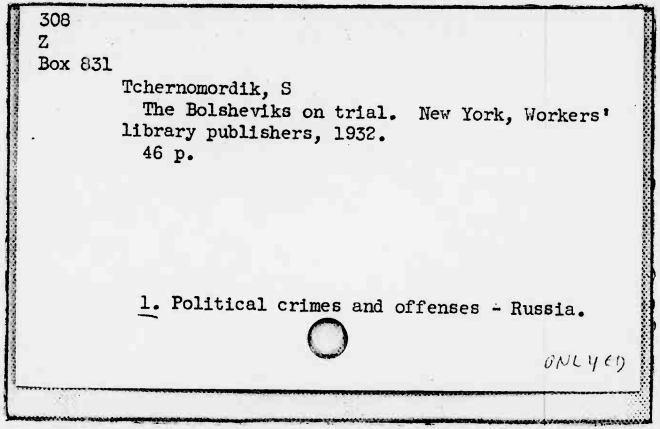
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THE BOLSHEVIKS ON TRIAL

By

S. TCHERNOMORDIK

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WORKERS' LIBRARY PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK.

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This Pamphlet is prepared under the supervision of the Society of Old Bolsheviks, Moscow.

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PREFACE.

Before it became the dominant party, the Russian Bolshevik Party traversed the long and tedious road of underground work. The October victory was not easily gained. For decades the Party carried on a bitter struggle against the Tsarist autocracy for the liberation of the working class. On the basis of different theoretical principles (the teachings of Marx and Engels) and on a changed social basis (developing capitalism and the growing labour movement) the Bolshevik Party continued the work of the earlier Russian revolutionary movement and utilised its experiences in its struggle with Tsarism.

In this prolonged conflict with the brutal enemy of the toiling masses, our Party suffered not a few casualties. Many fighters did not live to witness the triumph of the proletariat. They perished gloriously on the battle-field in open combat, or on the gallows, in penal servitude, in prisons; from tortures, and man-handlings, from the hard conditions of underground work.

But despite the great number of victims, the fierce blows of the Tsarist regime, and the temporary set-backs, our Party did not lay down its arms for a moment. After temporary defeats

it re-formed its ranks, so that it might continue the struggle under new conditions. It pushed onward continually towards victory. The basic organisational experience, which has facilitated the work of our Party in the struggle for the building of Socialism in our country, was gained in the period of underground work. The richness of this experience depended in many ways on the organisational methods used in the struggle against Tsarism. The complexity of these methods demanded from the Bolsheviks flexibility, initiative, persistency and a constant search for new organisational forms for the more advantageous use of the revolutionary forces.

I.

UNDER ARREST.

The Russian Bolsheviks learned much from the many rich experiences gained by the previous revolutionary generation in the struggle with Tsarism. While in the realm of theory, program and tactics the Bolsheviks rejected the ideological inheritance left by the movement of the *Narodniki* (populists) and of the *Narodnaya Volya* (People's Will) of the '70's, and took up their position entirely on the basis of proletarian revolutionary Socialism, based on the teachings of Marx and Engels, they utilised the experiences of their predecessors, especially those of the members of the People's Will, however, in the field of underground activities, and in their conduct during trial. For several decades preceding the October Revolution, the conditions for underground work for the revolutionary parties in Russia remained almost unchanged. The methods employed by the organs of Tsarism in its struggle with the revolutionary movement were, in general, the same, varying only in accordance with local conditions and with the ideas of particular heads of the Secret Police.

We know from the evidence of the Tsarist Secret Service (Okhrana), and the Police Administration, at present in our possession, that there was scarcely a single Bolshevik, engaged in underground work, who had not been systematically shadowed by the agents of the Okhrana. The reports of these agents

go into such great detail, that we are convinced that the agent of the Okhrana followed his victim's every step.

However, "outside observation" did not play the chief role in the Okhrana's activities. Commencing with the end of the '70's, the Tsarist government commenced to employ *agent-provocateurs* in its fight against the revolutionary movement. As the proletarian revolutionary movement grew the Police Department began to apply these methods on a large scale. For the "internal observation" of the organisation, and the discovery of its most active members, the Okhrana began to introduce its members into the directing organs of the Party, or terrorised members of the Party into becoming spies.

The archives of the Tsarist Okhrana indicate that these *agents-provocateurs*, who appear in the records under pseudonyms (most of them, after careful investigation, have been identified) gave fairly complete information as to the activities of the organisation. Moreover, in order to safeguard the secrecy of the Okhrana's work, they reported on their own work and activities within the organisation, under their Party pseudonyms. This mass provocation was a powerful weapon in the hands of Tsarism in its fight against the revolutionary movement. It complicated our struggle, in that we suffered many defeats, and made it difficult for us to carry on mass work. It compelled us to work in an extremely conspiratorial fashion, and to withdraw into the narrow shell of a secret organisation.

However, neither the information gathered by the outside agents of the Okhrana, nor the information obtained by the *agents-provocateurs* could provide sufficient material for the complete discovery of the organisation, or, even under the barbarian and bloody regime of the Tsarist autocracy, provide

grounds for prosecution, or if they did, give them the possibility of formulating charges involving long terms of imprisonment or exile. The laws governing the Okhrana (which were in force up to the February Revolution) gave the latter power to arrest all active members of the organisation at sight, to keep them in prison without trial for long periods, and to deport them; but they could not place revolutionists on trial or sentence them to penal servitude or death. That was the function of the court.

A revolutionist of the seventies, Mishkin, once said that "A Tsarist court . . . was no better than a brothel" (Mishkin's speech at his trial). Nevertheless, even the Tsarist court was obliged to have some legal basis for passing the sentence that the government desired. The reports of the detectives and *agents-provocateurs* were not treated as legal evidence. Firstly, because the reports were not direct evidence, and hence could be easily refuted at the trial, and secondly, because the *agents-provocateurs* could not be produced at the trial, since the Okhrana was interested in concealing their identity. Again, neither the detectives nor the *agents-provocateurs* could give a complete picture of the activities of the organisation, since the system under which the Party organised its secret activities only enabled them to become familiar with single episodes and aspects of the work.

For this reason the Department of State Defence (Okhrana) and the Police Administration could only begin to collect materials that could be produced at the trial after the arrests, after the organisations had been raided. They tried to get information about the whole organisation on the basis of evidence obtained by questioning the prisoners. If they failed to

get that information they kept the prisoners under preliminary arrest or deported them to other districts. Sometimes they were obliged to liberate the prisoners owing to lack of evidence. This latter course was very distasteful to the authorities, because they felt that all their efforts had been wasted.

That is why the authorities relied so much on the preliminary investigations which sometimes dragged on for years. The police officers and the examining magistrates did everything they could, during the examination of the prisoners, to induce them to give evidence that would help to betray the organisation completely and provide material for the trial.

A revolutionist under arrest and examination, had a great responsibility thrust upon him. It was not an easy matter to fight against the unseen forces of the secret police, and now, under arrest, the revolutionist was face to face with the cunning, experienced agent of the Okhrana for the first time, who strove in every conceivable way to trap his victim. It must be said that, owing to lack of experience of the revolutionist, or because he failed to understand the full consequences of his conduct under examination for the organisation, the Okhrana sometimes succeeded in procuring the material they sought.

II.—GIVING EVIDENCE.

As a result of many years' experience during the Tsarist regime, the Bolsheviks came to the conclusion that the best policy was to refuse to answer any questions whatever. These tactics were dictated by the methods which the Okhrana employed in trying to unearth the movement.

The revolutionist who fell into the enemies' hands was cut off from the outside world, and kept in solitary confinement for a month or two. No questions were asked, he was just left alone with his thoughts. This was, so to speak, the psychological preparation for the examination. During this period the Okhrana searched their archives to discover the exact identity of the prisoner. Frequently, the prisoner's parents came to the Okhrana asking for permission to visit him. The Okhrana officers would enter into conversation with them, and thus learn details of the prisoner's family life. They would warn them of the "terrible fate" awaiting their son, brother, or sister, as the case may be, and thus tried to work upon the feelings of the relatives in order to persuade them to advise the prisoner to make a "frank confession," because only "in this way," the Okhrana agent would say, "will he be able to escape the fate that awaits him."

POLICE SOCIALISM.

After a month or two—it depended on the speed with which they gathered in the material—the prisoner is finally summoned for examination. The type of examination conducted by the Okhrana magistrate was determined by the social position and the personality of the prisoner. If he was a worker, the nature of the examination was very primitive. In keeping with the brutal customs of Tsarist Russia and with the attitude of the ruling classes towards the workers as towards beings of an inferior breed, the Okhrana officials tried to terrorise the prisoners at once. "If you don't confess, you son of a bitch, I will have you rot in prison, you will not leave here alive," was the classical threat of the Okhrana. If the worker was a

revolutionist of long standing, the attitude of the Okhrana agent was "milder." In such a case they treated him as a professional revolutionist, for they knew that these crude tricks would not work.

The treatment accorded to these professional revolutionists was more "subtle." Opposite the prisoner there were seated, not ferocious enemies, not brutes, ready to tear him to pieces, or a jeering malignant enemy, gloating over his victim, but a "humane" gentleman who sympathised with his "misfortune." The "conversation" begins, the tone is extraordinarily polite, the face of the Okhrana agent reveals deep concern for the fate of the prisoner. The latter is treated to expensive cigarettes (the prisoner had not smoked for a long time), tea and biscuits are brought in, and sometimes a good meal from the nearest restaurant.

"You are still young, your whole life is still before you; a single false step may ruin your whole career. It is very difficult for me to help you in spite of my warm regard for you, because there is too much evidence against you. All the material in our possession speaks against you. A very cruel fate awaits you. Only a frank confession can save you. If you make it, then perhaps, we may succeed in liberating you entirely. A few days ago your mother called. Have you no pity for the old lady? She is overwhelmed with sorrow, and your revolutionary enthusiasm is the cause of it all. If you should be sent to the gallows, your mother will never survive it."

Such is the introduction. If this proves of no avail, the official starts a "friendly" conversation with the prisoner on all sorts of topics, hoping to put him off his guard. If he is lucky

he learns the political views of the prisoner and so determines which political party he belongs to. For interviews of this kind the most skilled Okhrana agents were employed, those who were fairly well equipped with knowledge on political questions. Certainly their knowledge was very superficial, but it was quite sufficient for their "narrow specialities." Since they were often able to get hold of illegal literature they were sometimes even better acquainted with it than the revolutionist they were examining. In this respect the chief of the Moscow Okhrana, Zubatov*, distinguished himself by creating a whole

* Zubatov, one time Chief of the Moscow Department of the Okhrana, initiator and founder of "Police Socialism," called "Zubatovschina" after him. Supported by the Tsarist government and the organisational machine of the Okhrana, Zubatov in 1890 and subsequent years, established a series of workers' organisations, directed by agents of the Okhrana, for the purpose of combating the revolutionary labour movement, which was developing on a large scale at that time. The "platform" of this organisation, which attracted the politically backward, those who had not yet severed their connections with the village, consisted of the following: the intelligentsia requires Revolution and all kinds of "freedoms," but the workers need only to have their material position improved, and the latter may be accomplished within the framework of the autocracy, which is ready to protect the interests of the workers. In order to strengthen the popularity of this organisation among the masses, Zubatov was compelled to go the length of calling strikes, so as to bring about conflicts with the bourgeoisie, who did not want to bear the burden of these police experiments. In these clashes the Zubatov movement experienced its first defeats. The final collapse of Zubatovschina came before the first Revolution, when it became obvious that the frame-work of the Zubatov organisations was too weak to hold back the revolutionary class movement of the proletariat and that these organisations were objectively beginning to serve the interests of the revolution. The Gapon movement was the swan song of Zubatovschina. After January 9, 1905, when the priest Father Gapon, led

school of "educated Okhrana agents." Quite a number of revolutionists with limited experience, won over by this feigned "sincerity," were caught in the trap. From these "discussions" with the arrested revolutionists the Okhrana agents obtained valuable material which enabled them to study the personnel of the revolutionary organisation.

After these "free and easy" conversations, the agent of the Okhrana passes to "real business." The examination begins. If the prisoner had allowed himself to be drawn into the "conversation" with the Okhrana agent before the examination, half the work was done. The prisoner, without realising it himself, continues the conversation. The agent tries to astonish the prisoner with the exactness of the information in his possession. "On such and such a date, at such and such an hour you were at such and such a place; you carried such and such a parcel, tied up in a newspaper. You stayed there such and such a time and from there left in the company of so and so, at such and such an hour, and went to such and such a place." The prisoner is astounded. "On such and such a date you were at such and such a meeting; there were such and such persons present, and you said so and so." He is even more astonished. "Your denials are of no use, we know everything. We have learned it all from your comrades."

Crushed by this evidence, the prisoner, already caught in the

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the workers to the Winter Palace to petition the Tsar and when they were ruthlessly shot down by the Tsar's troops, all illusions concerning "Police Socialism" were dissipated.

Zubatov tried very hard to plant the seeds of his "teachings" among the revolutionary prisoners who fell into his hands.

toils of the Okhrana, is forced to give evidence. Either he begins to give full testimony, sparing neither himself nor his friends, and in this way unwillingly becomes a traitor. or he tries to invent evidence in order to disprove the agent's evidence, and in this way becomes entangled in contradictions, thus strengthening the authenticity of the Okhrana's evidence. In both cases the agent is able to obtain fresh material for unearthing the organisation, and for the trial.

Frank testimonies and attempts to "disprove" the evidence of the agents produced unfortunate results. It helped the Okhrana to unravel the complicated knot of the "case," and gave them clues for additional arrests and for the complete destruction of the organisation. It led to the betrayal of comrades, and in cases of imaginary evidence, to contradictions and to hints as to the part played by the prisoners in the revolutionary organisation.

DANGERS OF GIVING EVIDENCE.

Frank testimony by a revolutionist was often the beginning of his political death. The Okhrana utilised this frank testimony to compromise him in the eyes of his organisation or to invite him to become an agent of the Okhrana. "You maintain that you don't know so and so, and never met him," says the Okhrana agent, "but here your colleague 'N' denies the truth of your statement in this matter. Here, would you like to glance over this testimony?" and he gives him a statement alleged to have been written by "N." Returning to the prison cell, the prisoner denounces "N," and hastens to tell all the political prisoners: "N is betraying us, beware of him." And

"N," through his lack of caution, having been caught in the net of the Okhrana, drifts away from the revolutionary movement and is branded as a traitor all his life. It also happened that the prisoner, forced to the wall by the evidence given by the weaker comrade in his "frank confession," is compelled to admit the correctness of the evidence or give contradictory evidence, which of course got him more entangled. Often, with the best of intentions, a prisoner would take the whole blame upon himself and try to keep his comrades out of the business. But no good came of this, it was all grist to the Okhrana mill. The comrade did not succeed in saving anybody, but either got himself entangled in contradictions, which confirmed the evidence of traitors, ran the risk of becoming a traitor himself, or at least of compromising himself in the eyes of the Party.

There was a case in Kharkov of a worker, named Voikov, who was very popular among the workers and who had been deported for the active part he took in the May Day demonstrations. He was brought back to Kharkov to give evidence on the work of the Kharkov Social-Democratic Party. He gave testimony, repented and admitted his sins. As a reward he was liberated from prison and his deportation was cancelled.

And then one of the prisoners in this case decided that since Voikov had betrayed everything, there was no sense in refusing to give testimony, and he too gave evidence at his own risk, partly affirming and partly denying the evidence of Voikov for the purpose of deceiving the gendarmes, and of exculpating his comrades. The result was that he supplied the Okhrana with valuable material and himself nearly became an accomplice of

Voikov and barely escaped being branded as a traitor. Only when this case was cleared up was he saved from shame and public disgrace.

But there were not a few cases when frank confessions led to a direct betrayal of the revolutionary cause. The Okhrana resorted to blackmail. "Although your testimony is frank and even if the court should find extenuating circumstances, it cannot give you a favourable verdict. Severe punishment awaits you. On the other hand when your comrades hear that you have frankly confessed (and the court cannot conceal it) you will be compromised in the eyes of the revolutionists and they will try to take revenge on you, perhaps kill you. Yes, you are in a bad fix. But there is a way out. Come and work with us. We don't demand much from you. You can remain in the organisation, continue to carry on your work and keep us informed. If you agree, we are ready to keep your testimony secret, set you free, and thus save you from your dismal fate."

This reminds us of the proverb: "Give the devil a finger and he will take the whole hand." Many inexperienced young revolutionists were caught in the net of the cunning, hypocritical agent of the Okhrana under such circumstances. They made the mistake of believing that the ferocious enemy was "human"; they were deceived by the suave manners of the agent and allowed themselves to be drawn into discussions. For a moment the flame of hatred and contempt for the enemy was extinguished. That sealed their fate. It was the first step in the moral collapse of the revolutionist.

Most often (even in the case of experienced revolutionists) evidence was given with the best of intentions. The revolutionist

often gave testimony, not in order to try to clear himself, but, as he thought, in the interest of the revolutionary organisations. Some revolutionists took the entire blame upon themselves so as to clear the more responsible leaders of the organisation. But these tactics gave positive results only in those cases where they were employed by experienced revolutionists. Generally speaking the Okhrana knew very well who its most dangerous enemy was and it had sufficient means at its disposal to keep its hold on him; it was not deceived by the evasions of the prisoner, but the prisoner's evidence was of immense value to the Okhrana, because it provided clues for completely unearthing the revolutionary organisation, provided material for the prosecution and for the liquidation of the organisation on "legal grounds."

For these reasons the Bolshevik Party, during the Tsarist regime, advised its members to *refuse* to give evidence of any kind during examination. In this the Party was not only guided by its own experience but also by that of the preceding generation. It remembered the testament of that outstanding revolutionary organiser and conspirator of the end of the '70's, a member of the "People's Will" Party, Alexander Mikhailov, who said: "I ordain you, brothers, to employ a uniform method of giving evidence prior to the trial; furthermore, I recommend that you refuse to make any statement under examination, no matter how clear the denunciation, or the reports of the Secret Service appear to be. This will save you from many mistakes."

It must be borne in mind that the refusal to give evidence carried with it heavy penalties, particularly for the Bolshevik revolutionists. Generally speaking, it was not easy to be an active Bolshevik under illegal or semi-illegal conditions, but it

was doubly hard for the Bolshevik when he fell into the hands of his enemies. But they had to be prepared to take the consequences of these tactics.

TORTURE.

As was said above, the Tsarist Okhrana strove to obtain evidence from the arrested revolutionist by every conceivable means. But they did not always employ "humane" tactics and "refined" manners. The Okhrana usually employed those tactics during the first stages of the examination in the hope of luring the prisoners into its net. But long experience taught the Bolshevik to defeat these tactics. Fewer and fewer victims were caught on the hook of the Okhrana. Then the agents of the Okhrana showed their true colours. After the Revolution of 1905 there were very few "friendly discussions" with arrested Bolsheviks on the teachings of Marx, or the tactics of the Bolshevik and Menshevik Parties, and on general political questions.

After the pogroms that were organised by the Police Department and its agents all over the country on the eve of, and during the first revolution, after the brutal suppression of the 1905 Revolution, by the Tsarist government, the Okhrana could catch or deceive hardly anybody, not even the most inexperienced, with its hypocritical tactics at preliminary examinations. The Zubatov movement suffered complete collapse. Zubatov himself was released from his duties and sent out of Moscow. The cards were exposed and the Okhrana appeared openly as the bitter enemy of the revolutionary movement.

The Okhrana agents abandoned the practice of "conversations" and "persuasion" and adopted the tactics of terror. The enemy was triumphant and strove to consolidate its victory by means of terrorism.

During this period of the Russion Revolution, the Okhrana mostly resorted to physical force against arrested revolutionists under examination in order to compel them to give evidence. Torture was applied systematically during the examination: suspension by their finger tips, twisting of the hands and legs, pouring of large volumes of water mixed with oil into the mouth, mutilation, flogging, these were the methods employed by the Okhrana to compel political prisoners to give evidence. Many Bolsheviks, who fell into the hands of the Okhrana still bear the marks of the torture inflicted on them.

"TRIAL."

The more stubborn the Bolsheviks were in refusing to give evidence the more this system of torture was employed. The tactics of refusing to give evidence were dictated by the political conditions prevailing at that time. For the purpose of liquidating the Bolshevik movement more rapidly, the Tsarist government began to hand over the cases of the Bolsheviks to the military courts and to the circuit courts, on charges which, according to the Criminal Code, carried penalties of death and penal servitude. The practice of administrative exile without trial to remote parts of Eastern Siberia which prevailed until that time did not attain its end, because the Bolsheviks did not stay in exile long and very often escaped, sometimes even

while on the way to the place of exile. The Tsarist government therefore decided to put the active Bolsheviks thoroughly out of commission.

Under these conditions every careless word uttered during the examination might cause irretrievable harm, not only to the entire organisation, but also to the person under examination. The attempts of some weak spirits to clear themselves by giving open testimony did not accomplish the purpose; long terms of imprisonment or penal servitude awaited even them.

The tactics of refusing to give evidence involved immeasurable suffering for the Bolsheviks. But this was only suffering of the body. The torments and torture of the hangmen threw no blemish on the revolutionary honour of the Bolsheviks. On the contrary, the refusal to give evidence under torture expressed the courage of the revolutionist and his contempt for the enemy. By his refusal to give evidence during examination, the Bolshevik signified his determined refusal to take any part whatsoever in "exposing the work." Of course, the agents of the Tsarist government had sufficient means at their disposal to punish the defenceless Bolsheviks who fell into their clutches. They could shoot them on the pretext that they "attempted to escape"; they could simply strangle them or shoot them in the back while in prison. But, the Tsarist government tried to punish the Bolsheviks in a "legal" manner, by putting them on trial.

The Russian Bolsheviks refused to be parties to this "judicial farce," and to the last the defenceless Bolshevik expressed his revolutionary determination; he refused to give evidence and, utilising the right to the final speech in defence, held aloft the banner of the revolution and hurled his defiance at his enemies.

The shadowing of the Bolshevik did not cease with his arrest. The Okhrana tried to exploit the life and conduct of the Bolshevik while in prison, for the purpose of collecting material for the trial. For this purpose the Okhrana placed its agent in the same cell as the Bolshevik, if he was put in a common cell, or in the next cell, if he was in solitary confinement. They counted on the inexperience of the novice, on his indiscretion, or his dropping the rules of secrecy whilst in prison. The agent of the Okhrana in the cell tried to gain his confidence, to befriend him, and discover the details of the work. Sometimes, after a lengthy stay together in the same cell, if the agent were experienced and did not arouse suspicion by his conduct, this manœuvre succeeded. The desire for social intercourse on the part of the imprisoned revolutionist often led him into unguarded discussions with his fellow prisoners, made him forget the need for discretion even while in prison. The new and inexperienced revolutionist particularly, sometimes thought the rules of secrecy were not required behind prison bars. The agents of the Okhrana were able to play on this. They even tried to obtain incriminating documents from the Bolshevik. They tried to persuade him to send letters "outside" which were intercepted by the Okhrana and produced at the trial as evidence against him.

But, if the Bolshevik did not become intimate with him, the agent limited himself to watching his victim. He listened to the conversation carried on by the Bolsheviks among themselves; made note of the tapping of signals between the Bolsheviks incarcerated in different cells, and thus, in one way or another, obtained good material for reports to the Okhrana.

More frequently, when the Bolshevik was in solitary confinement, the agent of the Okhrana occupied the neighbouring cell. As soon as the arrested Bolshevik arrived in this cell a tapping was heard in the political prisoners' code, asking: "What is your name? In what case? Under what conditions were you arrested? Who else was arrested with you?" The novice, insufficiently experienced in conspiratorial work, thought this "correspondent" was a comrade and so swallowed the bait. Sometimes the new prisoner was warned in time by his comrades: "Comrade, be careful, so and so, in such and such a cell, is a police agent." If this was not done, the agent succeeded in gaining his confidence, induced him to write letters, which of course, would be handed over to the Okhrana.

Not only were agents of the Okhrana placed in cells with the prisoners, but the prison guards, the prison warden and his assistants closely watched the arrested Bolsheviks and reported what they saw to the Okhrana.

For this reason the general rule was established that a Bolshevik must observe the rules of secrecy in prison as strictly as "outside."

III.—FAMOUS SPEECHES.

The whole conduct of the Bolshevik under arrest was dictated by the interests of the revolution, the interests of the working class and of his Party. During the examination he refused to give evidence in the interest of the Party and at the trial used the prisoner's dock as the tribune from which to denounce his class enemies, and to proclaim to the broad masses the pro-

gramme and tactics of his Party. Although the cases of "political criminals" were heard behind closed doors, and the court consisted of Tsarist officials, representatives of the nobility and the bourgeoisie (the so-called "representatives of the estates"), and although these trials were not reported in the press, nevertheless, the speeches of the revolutionists were made public. They were reported in the illegal press, and thus circulated amongst the broad masses. These speeches served as excellent agitation material, and for a whole generation revolutionists were educated by them.

Both at the examination and at the trial, the Bolsheviks took into consideration the experiences of the preceding revolutionary organisations. In the '70's and '80's the Tsarist government had not yet adopted the simpler method of dealing with the revolutionists. Administrative exile (*i.e.* without trial) to places "not so distant" and "distant"* began to be applied later. At that time the Tsarist government gave the political prisoners the semblance of a trial. Their unfortunate experience in giving Vera Zasulich, who attempted to assassinate General Trepov, trial by jury is well known. Vera Zasulich was found not guilty. After this, the Tsarist government gave up such "experiments." "Political" cases began to be transferred to military courts or to courts composed of the "representatives of estates," *i.e.*, the most bitter enemies of the working masses.

In order to show what a fund of experience the Bolsheviks obtained from the revolutionists of the '70's regarding court tactics, we will quote excerpts from the brilliant and biting

* The formal wording of the order of exile.—Ed.

speeches delivered by two revolutionists of that time: the plebian intellectual Ippolit Mishkin, and the weaver Peter Alexeyev.

MISHKIN.

Mishkin was one of several hundred revolutionists arrested for propaganda work among the peasants, which was being carried on in the middle of the '70's in many Russian districts. In many parts of the country the Tsarist government arrested hundreds of agitators and put them on trial in order to smash the revolutionary movement of that time. Altogether 193 revolutionists were brought to trial and it became known as the "Trial of the 193." This was the first great political trial held in Russia. To many of the accused it was their revolutionary baptism, which helped them later on to play a great role in the revolutionary movement. However, the participants did not constitute a single organisation, directed by a single centre. Under the influence of the ideas of Bakunin, which prevailed at that time, the young intellectuals abandoned their studies and their families, gave up their previous ways of life, and "went to the people" in the villages and supported themselves there by such work as they could find (as teachers, physicians, handicraftsmen and so on) so as to be nearer to the peasantry, and to rouse them to political consciousness. But this was not an organised movement in the sense that we understand it to-day. It was a movement united by the common ideas that swayed the revolutionary intelligentsia at that time. For this reason, the trial of the 193, artificially instigated by the government, revealed not an organisation, but the revolutionary ideas of that time. At the trial, Mishkin appeared as

the brilliant exponent of these ideas and of revolutionary implacability towards the enemies of the people.

Almost half-a-century has elapsed since then, and in spite of the events of world-wide importance which have occurred since, one cannot but feel enraptured by the revolutionary heroism and passion displayed by Mishkin at the trial. He was not the "accused," but a terrible judge, pouring forth his wrath on the "judges." In spite of the continuous interruptions of the President of the Senate (the case was heard at a special session of the Senate), Mishkin succeeded in voicing his ideas.

The President of the court wanted to restrict Mishkin to the specific charges on which he was being tried, and not allow him to say anything that might condemn the Tsarist government, and that would reveal the condition of the country and the peasantry. Mishkin, however, insisted on speaking to the country from the dock, to explain the ideas of the revolutionary movement, to expose the policies of the autocratic government and to present a picture of the people's suffering. A bitter struggle ensued between the President and Mishkin which only ended with the forcible removal of Mishkin from the court room and the closing of the session by the perplexed Senator.

This struggle commenced at the very beginning of Mishkin's examination. To the customary formula of the President, "Accused Mishkin, you are charged with belonging to an illegal society, the object of which is, in the more or less distant future, to overthrow and change the system of government," Mishkin answered, "I admit that I belong, not to a society, but to the Social Revolutionary Party." And he went on to say: "We

represent an infinitesimal part of the now large Russian Social Revolutionary Party, understanding by this term the whole mass of persons who hold similar opinions to ours—similar in general of course, but not in particular—the union between whom is mainly inward, but which nevertheless is sufficiently real and is determined by a unity of purpose and similarity more or less in methods of practical activity." Further, ignoring the interruptions of the President who tried to keep him to the definite charges in the indictment, Mishkin described the poverty-stricken conditions of the people, their exploitation, their political repression, the history of the people's movement, and proved that the programme and tactics of the "Social Revolutionary Party" is in complete accordance with the hopes and aspirations of the people.

In the usual stereotyped form, the indictment charged the accused with undermining religion, and repudiating science. Mishkin indignantly denied these charges. "In the ideal social structure for the realisation of which I am striving, and the establishment of which is the aim of my activities, there will be no criminal penalties for spreading pernicious ideas, including religious ideas, for heresy, for observing or failing to observe certain rites prescribed by any particular church, etc. In one word, there will be no place for violence against the ideas and conscience of men. . . . . According to our ideal, there should be no power to compel one to lie and be hypocritical under threat of punishment. . . . ."

President: "But nobody compels you to lie and simulate, now. I request you not to make such insinuations."

Mishkin: "According to your laws I am liable to criminal

punishment. I cannot leave the Orthodox Church and adopt another faith, consequently the law compels me to be hypocritical."

And the President could not find anything better to say than to declare that the accused had no right to criticise the existing laws. It became perfectly clear from the behaviour of the President, who grew more and more furious as the trial proceeded, and who interrupted Mishkin at every sentence, that further words were useless. All that could be said, had been said. This became particularly obvious when Mishkin protested against the torture to which he was subjected while under examination. The President said that this protestation was unsupported by evidence, and when Mishkin stated that he had made a written protest to the Public Prosecutor, the President answered that this was a matter for the Prosecutor, who was not a subordinate of the court.

Then Mishkin made his last speech, which the gendarmes prevented him finishing by gagging him. Here is the speech:

"In that case, after the numerous interruptions to which I have been subjected by the President, there is only one thing left for me to do and that is to make what perhaps is my last declaration. I am quite convinced now that the opinion expressed by my comrades who refused to make any statement at the trial was quite right, namely that in spite of the absence of publicity, I would not be given the opportunity of making clear the real character of the case. Now, it is obvious to everybody, that here at every frank word uttered the accused is gagged. Now I can say, and I have every right to say it, that this is not a trial, but an empty farce, or something even

worse, hideous, shameful, more shameful . . ." At this point the gendarmes seized Mishkin and gagged him; but in a stifled voice he managed to finish the sentence: ". . . than a brothel; there women sell their bodies because they are in want, but here the judges are rascals and lick-spittles; for the sake of rank and fat salaries they trade in others' lives and sell truth and justice and all that is dearest to humanity."

Mishkin is forcibly dragged out. In the gallery women fall into hysterics, noise and confusion reign. The session is closed, and the court room is cleared.

ALEXEYEV.

The speech delivered by the weaver Peter Alexeyev, at the "Trial of the 50" was fully embued with *class* consciousness. He was not an intellectual commoner "going to the people" to rouse them to rebellion, not merely an avenger of the people's suffering, but a true proletarian, who understood the interests and the problems of his CLASS. In spite of the Narodniki teachings which he imbibed in the circle organised by Sophie Bardin, his class instinct triumphed over all the Narodniki dogmas, and for the first time in the history of the revolutionary movement a class conscious proletarian, who bore the marks of the terrible exploitation of Russian capitalism and the political oppression of Tsarism spoke out in court. He faced the Tsarist judges not as a "poor working man," crushed by exploitation, but as a revolutionary proletarian, submitting a bill of charges against his class enemy.

In the simplest manner imaginable, he described the condi-

tions of the workers. They work 17 hours a day for a wage of 40 kopecks a day, and from their meagre wages fines are deducted for every trifle. He described the ignorance and degradation in which the workers lived, the insults and torments they suffered at the hands of the capitalists.

"Under present conditions," he said, "the workers cannot satisfy the most elementary human needs. Have we any leisure for study? Do we, the poor, receive any education in our childhood? Are useful books published for the working-man? Where, and what may they study? Look at the Russian popular literature. Nothing can better illustrate this case than such books as 'Bava the Crown Prince,' 'Yeruslan Lazarevitch,' 'Vanka-Kain,' 'The Bride is in the Ink and the Bridegroom in the Soup,' etc. That is why the popular opinion about books is that: 'Some are amusing, others are religious.' This is reality. In vain does the government think that the workers don't understand this reality.

"Do you think we do not see that all around us people are enriching themselves and making merry at our expense? Do you think we do not understand why we are valued so cheaply and where the fruits of our intolerable labour go? Why are the others able to live luxuriously, without toil? Whence come their riches? The working people, although living in primitive conditions and until now without education, regard this as a temporary evil; and they think the same about political power which has been temporarily usurped by force."

What was the way out? P. Alexeyev declared that first of all it was necessary to overthrow the autocracy, which was on the side of the capitalists. Considering that the ideas of Bukunin, who repudiated the struggle for political liberties, predominated at that time, the idea expressed by Alexeyev was a bold innovation.

"The Russian working people," he said in conclusion, "can rely only upon itself; it can expect help from no one except the young intellectuals . . . (the President interrupts—"Be silent"). Only they are willing to march inseparably with us until the muscular arms of millions of working people are raised. . . (the President shouts: "Be silent!") Alexeyev, raising his voice: ". . . and the yoke of despotism which is upheld by soldiers' bayonets, will be reduced to dust."

According to a lawyer who was present at the trial, Alexeyev's speech produced such a powerful impression on the public and even on his guards that they were all dumbfounded. "If," said the attorney, "Alexeyev had faced about and left the dock, nobody would have stopped him, so astonished were they all."

Peter Alexeyev's speech for many decades was circulated in thousands of copies as a fine agitational pamphlet.

ATTACK AT TRIAL.

From the revolutionists of the '70's the Bolsheviks inherited revolutionary courage and determination. Like them, the Bolsheviks, when on trial, did not "defend" themselves, but attacked. But in addition they introduced something new, that reflected the complicated conditions of the political life of Rus-

sia of the twentieth century. It was insufficient to hurl biting criticism against the political regime and the exploitation of Russian capitalism. It was essential at the trial to unfold the programme and tactics of the Bolsheviks, and to distinguish them from the programmes and tactics of the other illegal revolutionary parties. The Public Prosecutor in his indictment swept all parties into one heap from the point of view of the statutes of the criminal code which provided penalties for "those who strive to overthrow, in the more or less distant future, the existing order." From the point of view of the prosecutor, the Bolsheviks, the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks were all "criminals," some more dangerous, others less, the difference being only in degree, so to speak. Under these circumstances the Bolshevik's task in court was a complicated one. His speech at the trial had to be a political speech, in which he had to trace very clearly the programme, the tactics and current political tasks of the Party. The Bolshevik on trial was not so much expected to make a fine oration as to formulate the Party position.

This is precisely the main trait revealed by the Bolsheviks who had to stand trial on the eve of the first revolution. As an example we will quote excerpts from two speeches, which most clearly illustrate these traits; the speech of Leon Goldman, who was arrested in connection with the Kishenev illegal printing plant of the newspaper *Iskra,* and the speech of Bogdan Knunyantz, arrested in connection with the work of the Moscow Committee of the Bolsheviks (1904).

GOLDMAN.

In 1901, in Kishenev, the Okhrana seized the underground

printing plant of the Social-Democratic group *Iskra,* from the left wing of which later developed the Bolshevik Party. In connection with this raid a group of Social-Democrats, under the leadership of Leon Goldman, were arrested. After two years of preliminary investigation, during which the accused were kept in solitary confinement, the case was brought up in the circuit court (with the "representatives of the estates," of course) behind closed doors.

In the old stereotyped form, the indictment charged the "criminals" with "incitement to riot against the supreme powers," and it was from this point of view that all the printed matter seized during the raid on the printing plant was regarded. The stupid agents of the inept Tsarist government were not so much concerned about analysing the revolutionary movements as in fitting the "cases" into the statutes of the law which provides a penalty of a long term of imprisonment, or exile to remote places in Eastern Siberia. It goes without saying that all the various trends in the revolutionary movement in Russia were tarred with the same brush in the opinion of the prosecution, with some slight difference in shade, determined, not by the character of the revolutionary party the accused belonged to, but by the degree of "criminality" of the accused. The task of the revolutionary Social-Democrats on trial under these circumstances was to make the trial one of principle, and to let the country know the true character of the Party, to familiarise it with its programme and policies. In short, the Bolshevik had to do at the trial what he did while at "liberty"—propagate the ideas and programme of his Party, and to call the masses to fight for the demands inscribed on its banner.

It was with this task in mind that Leon Goldman began his

speech. He said:

"I admit that I took part in the work of the secret press in Kishenev, which printed Social-Democratic literature. But I was very much surprised when I learned from the indictment that I am accused of inciting to riot. I absolutely deny the charge of inciting to riot. Social-Democracy has nothing in common with rioting. I am a Social-Democrat and I belong to the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party." Goldman then proceeded to explain the programme and tactics of the Social-Democratic Party.

It must be stated that Goldman's position at this trial was more favourable than that of the revolutionists of the '70s and '80s. The revolutionary wing of Social Democracy which was united in the "*Iskra*" group, in which Lenin played the leading role, had emerged victoriously from its struggle with the opportunist elements (the "economists") in the Social-Democratic movement. In this struggle the chief elements of the programme and tactics of the revolutionary Social-Democracy were crystallised. Parallel with this *internal* struggle, an *external* process of dissociation from the neo-Narodniki (the Socialist-Revolutionary Party) and from the Liberal movement, was taking place. This process was accompanied by a bitter struggle, directed by the "*Iskra*" group, led by Lenin. In this struggle on many fronts, revolutionary Social-Democracy acquired its ideological form and laid the basis of the movement which later developed into Bolshevism.

Goldman was thus able to come forward at the trial with the full programme of "*Iskra*" and to show that the question at issue was not a mere riot, but *revolution*, under the hegemony of the proletariat and led by Social-Democracy.

There is another aspect of Goldman's speech which distinguished it from the speeches delivered at their trial by the revolutionists of the '70s and '80s. His was the speech of a revolutionist of the epoch tinged with the red dawn of the approaching revolution. He said:

"We stand in the dock before this court, but we are not criminals. We are prisoners of war, and the government itself proves this by its conduct towards us. . . . The government snatched us from the ranks of the fighting revolutionary army, kept us in prison for two years and now, in handing us over to the court, wants to make us responsible for the revolutionary conflagration that is sweeping over all Russia. But where is the logic of this? By establishing a secret printing press, and publishing manifestoes and leaflets, we protested against the enforced silence to which the government condemned the country. By these means we sought to meet the growing demand of the people for freedom of speech, the need of which, during this period, has been felt by the widest strata of the people and society. And, if from the point of view of the autocratic government we have committed crimes, then the responsibility for this rests not only on us but on an enormous part of the population of Russia, whose will we carried out. But an entire people cannot commit a crime. The will of the people is law. And when the time arrives when the people will judge the government, it will mean that the time has arrived when the people will put the government in the dock. . . The government itself, by placing almost the whole of Russia under martial law, thereby proclaimed that all her citizens are politically unreliable. And all the politically unreliable, i.e., those in whom slavish submission has given way to the sense of civic duty, should unite with the revolutionary movement and take

their places in the ranks of the fighters for the liberation of Russia from the power of the bureaucracy, which builds its well-being on rivers of the people's blood. I, as a true citizen of the fatherland, did this. I joined the ranks of these fighters. I gave the great cause all my strength, all my abilities."

This is the manner in which the representative of a Party for which the path and perspectives of the revolution were clear, of the Party which led the proletarian masses to struggles and victories, could speak.

KNUNYANTZ.

The remarkably simple and profound speech delivered by the Bolshevik, Bogdan Knunyantz expressed the spirit of the on-coming revolution.

His trial took place on March 30th (old style) 1905, after the events of "Bloody Sunday," January 9th.

At the arrest of Knunyantz the manuscript of the manifesto signed by the "Moscow Committee R.S.D.L.P." was discovered. This was the only piece of "legal" evidence against him. If Knunyantz had desired to defend himself on legal grounds it would not have been difficult for him to refute the charge of belonging to the Moscow Committee and clear himself, particularly in view of the consternation that reigned among the agents of the Tsarist government after January 9th. But he did not choose to do this. As a revolutionist, as a Bolshevik, he decided to utilise the trial for the cause of his Party.

When the President of the court read the order of the Minister of Justice to hold the trial behind closed doors, Knunyantz asked whether the court could reverse this order. The reply was in the negative, upon which Bogdan Knunyantz made the following declaration:

"In view of the fact that the trial is to be held behind closed doors, which renders it impossible for public opinion to control this litigation between the revolutionists and the government, I think it is quite useless for me to take part in the court enquiry, and I warn you that I shall not answer any questions. With this I reserve for myself the right to the final speech, as I consider it my revolutionary duty to utilise every opportunity for propagating my ideas."

The experience of the revolutionary movement had not passed without leaving traces also on the Tsarist public prosecutors. At the trial of Knunyantz, the public prosecutor made a more or less politically literate speech. He characterised the political position of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, referred to the international character of the Party, the identity of its ideas, both as to programmes and theories, with those of the Western European Socialist Parties, and its Socialistic aims that could only be attained by means of social revolution. But, he said, Russian Social-Democracy was unlike Social-Democracy in Western Europe in that the latter engaged in the peaceful agitation and propaganda of its ideas, whereas Russian Social-Democracy incited the workers to rioting and mass violence. It was, he said, a second Pugatshev movement.*

* Pugatshev. Leader of the peasant rebellion on the Volga in 1773-75.

Developing the characteristics of Social-Democracy mentioned by the prosecutor, Knunyantz in his speech said:

"He (the prosecutor) was right, of course, in pointing out the international character of our programme and our whole theoretical view-point which is based on that of the teachers of international Socialism, Marx, and Engels. He correctly pointed out our fundamental aim—Socialism, and the only road to it—the social revolution, toward which, we are profoundly convinced, the whole development of our economic life is leading. We are certain that the proletariat will achieve socialism, not by way of social reforms, not by palliatives under the capitalist system, but by irreconcilable struggle against the very basis of that system—private ownership of the means of production—and that only with the transfer of the latter into the hands of the whole people will an end be put to the exploitation of one section of the people by another. The indispensable condition for this must be the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the conquest of political power by the proletariat."

At the time of the Knunyantz trial Russia was seething with political life. The defeats suffered by Tsarism in the Russo-Japanese War, the growth of the labour movement after the events of January 9th, the growth of the peasant movement, the revival of the liberal-bourgeois movement—all this disorganised the autocratic government, and the ground was shaking under its feet. Tsarism's former confidence in its own strength was shattered; the revolution was reaching for its throat and was ready to strangle it.

This picture of the epoch was reflected in Knunyantz's speech. He said:

"Mr. Prosecutor laid special emphasis on the last lines of the manifesto, ending with the exclamation 'Down with the Autocracy!' But who, now, does not cry out—'Down with the Autocracy'? Is there a single honest man in our country who does not understand that only the overthrow of the autocracy will extricate our country from the deadlock into which the rapacious policies of the bureaucrats have driven it; that only the overthrow of the autocracy will give an impetus to the further development of its cultural forces. . . After the heroic demonstration of the St. Petersburg proletariat, after the revolutionary strikes that have broken out all over Russia, after the united protest—after the strikes of the university students, after the ceaseless agrarian unrest, finally, after the movement which has now spread among the hitherto inert strata of educated society, it is no secret to anyone, that the days of the autocracy are numbered. Within a month or so, the terrible wave of the people's revolution will completely wipe out this relic of our barbaric past. And what does all this mean to this court? Really, to carry things to their logical conclusion, you should put the entire Russian people in the dock. But the great question will then arise as to who will be the accused and who the judges.

". . . Your court is not certain that the verdicts it pronounces can be carried out, and that all its work may not have been a waste of time. Take even my case. On a strict interpretation of articles 126 and 129 under which the prosecutor charges me, I should be sent to penal servitude up to eight years, or sent into lifelong exile. But is it not absurd, Messrs. Judges, to talk about such verdicts now? Is there one among us who seriously thinks that the autocracy will live for another eight years, or even one or two years? Does not the demand

of the law for lifelong exile at a time when none of us can be sure of the morrow sound like cruel irony? All Russia is seething. Very soon nothing will remain of the government and the rubbish of court orders and verdicts; and those who are now on trial will be among the most energetic leaders of young Russia. How then, Messrs. Judges, can you seriously think of passing paper resolutions?"

Perhaps the judges realised the awkward position they were in, for in spite of the slashing speech he made, Knunyantz received a sentence of only four months imprisonment.

USES OF LAWYERS.

Only a few words remain to be said about the role of counsel at the trials of Bolsheviks.

Some may ask: if the Bolsheviks did not "defend" themselves in court why was it necessary to engage counsel? Was that not inconsistent?

It was very useful, however, to have counsel at political trials. In the first place, through him the revolutionary prisoner, who was cut off for a long time from society, was able to establish contact with the "outside" world and with the representatives of his party. The lawyers sympathetic to the revolutionary movement did not refuse to act in this capacity. This contact was made easier by the fact that the lawyer was able to visit the prisoner alone in his cell both before as well as during the trial. A person sitting in solitary confinement knows the importance of connections with the outside world; it

keeps up the spirit of the comrade who is torn away from the active revolutionary ranks, it often enables him to continue to work for the movement by correspondence and literary activity. Connection with the "outside" world was often essential for the revolutionary prisoner in preparing his escape from prison.

Secondly, it was important that the revolutionist on trial, whose punishment the government was preparing behind closed doors, should have in the court room a man who had the right to interfere in the case, to speak and compel the court to adhere to the rules of court procedure formulated by the government itself, but which were systematically violated by the agents of the court when revolutionists were involved. Very often these rules of procedure, with which usually the revolutionist was not familiar, made it easier for him to expose the crimes of Tsarism and put the position of his Party.

Finally, in view of the absence of public control at the trial, since political cases were tried behind closed doors, counsel for the defence acted, as it were, as the representative of the public, who informed the latter about everything that took place at the trial. The government did not succeed in keeping the truth from the public, it did not succeed in keeping the secrets of the "court" torture-chamber and all the circumstances and details of the case. Through the lawyer, they became public property.

However, while inviting the services of the lawyer the Bolshevik restricted his sphere of activity.

The lawyer had to concern himself only with the juridicial aspects of the case. He was not to engage in the political

defence of the accused or to analyse the viewpoints of the Bolshevik Party for the purpose of shielding his client and mitigating the penalty. His task was more modest. During the trial he had to weaken the evidence juridicially, refute the evidence of the police officials and spies and show up the flimsiness of the charges. In his speech for the defence he had to make an estimation of the case from the legal point of view, to compromise it juridicially. Of course he had to bring forward all the juridical arguments at his command in order to try to secure an acquittal, or at least a light sentence for his client.

Regarding the political aspects of the case he was permitted by his client to sketch in his speech the political conditions of the country, against the background of which the case may have arisen, but under no circumstances to touch upon the viewpoint of the Bolshevik Party. The Bolshevik could not entrust a non-party lawyer, or one belonging to another party, with the task of speaking in the name of the Party. This task the accused Bolshevik took upon himself.

The degree to which the role of counsel for the defence was restricted by the Bolsheviks is strikingly illustrated by the following letter written by Lenin to Comrade Stasova and the arrested Moscow Bolsheviks, in reply to their question as to the line of conduct they were to pursue during the examination and at the trial.

Letter from Lenin to E. L. Stasova and to the Comrades in Moscow Prison 19th January, 1905.

Dear Friends,

I have received your inquiry as to tactics at the trial (from the letter of Absoluta and from a note, "passed on literally" through an unknown person). Absoluta writes of two points of view. In the note three groups are spoken of, perhaps the three following shades are being contemplated, which I will try to formulate.

1. Repudiate the trial and directly boycott it.
2. Repudiate the trial and not take part in the court investigation. To invite counsel only on condition that he speaks exclusively on the incompetency of the court from the point of view of abstract law. In the final speech to expound our *credo* and demand that the case be tried by jury.
3. Concerning the final speech, the same. To utilise the trial as an agitational medium and for this reason to take part in the court investigation with the help of counsel. To point out the illegality of the trial and even to call witnesses to prove an alibi.

Further question. Should you merely state that you are Social-Democrats by conviction or admit that you are members of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party?

You write that it is necessary to have a pamphlet on this question. I am of the opinion that it is not expedient now, without experience, to issue a pamphlet. Perhaps we will deal with it in the newspaper, when occasion offers. Maybe some

one of the arrested will write a short article on the subject for the newspaper (about a thousand words). This will be the best perhaps as the beginning of a discussion.

Personally, I have not yet arrived at a definite opinion, and I would prefer, before speaking definitely, to discuss the matter thoroughly with the comrades awaiting trial or who have been on trial. I will formulate my ideas in order to start such a discussion. Much depends on what the trial will be like, i.e., whether there will be any opportunity of utilising it for purposes of agitation or not. If the first will be the case then tactics No. 1. are unsuitable. If the second, then they will be useful but only after an open, specific and energetic protest and declaration. If, however, there is an opportunity to utilise the trial for agitational purposes, then tactics No. 3. are desirable. A speech explaining the *credo* is very desirable in general, very useful, in my opinion and in the majority of cases might play an agitational role. Particularly in beginning to utilise the Tsarist court, a Social-Democrat should in his speech, deal with the Social-Democratic programme and tactics. It is argued that it is not expedient to confess membership of the Party, of a specific organisation, that it is better to limit oneself to the statement: "I am a Social-Democrat by conviction." It seems to me that organisational relationships should not be mentioned in the speech, i.e., to say: "for obvious reasons, I shall not speak about my organisational relationships, but I am a Social-Democrat and I shall speak about our Party." Such an attitude would have two advantages: it will be precisely and definitely stated that it is forbidden to speak about organisational relationships (i.e., whether I am a member of an organisation, what organisation, etc.), and at the same time reference will be made to OUR Party. This is necessary in order that the Social-Democratic

speeches in court shall be Party speeches and declarations, so that the propaganda shall serve the purpose of the Party. In other words: formally I will not discuss my organisational relationships, I shall remain silent about them; formally, I shall not speak in the name of any organisation whatsoever, but as a Social-Democrat, I shall speak to you about Our Party and ask you to accept my declaration as an attempt to expound precisely the Social-Democratic opinions that have been expressed in the whole of our Social-Democratic literature, in such and such pamphlets, leaflets and newspapers.

Concerning the lawyer, you must keep a tight hold on him. Put him in a "state of siege," because these intellectual rascals often play dirty tricks. They should be warned in advance: "If, you son of a bitch, you play any dirty trick or commit any *political* OPPORTUNISM, if you speak about the immaturity, or about the incorrectness of Socialism, about being carried away with enthusiasm, *about Social-Democrats repudiating violence*, about the peaceful character of their teachings and of their movement, or anything like that, then, I, the accused will immediately interrupt you publicly, call you a scamp, and announce that I reject such a defence, etc."; and carry out this threat.

Only a clever lawyer should be engaged; others are no use. They must be told in advance to confine themselves exclusively to criticising and tripping up the witnesses and the prosecutor on questions regarding the facts and the wording of the indictment, exclusively to concern themselves with discrediting the weak points of the court. Even the clever liberal lawyer is very much inclined to say or to *hint at* the peaceful nature of the Social-Democratic movement, at the recognition of its cultural role even by men like Attorney Wagner, etc. All such inclina-

tions should be scotched at their roots. As, Bebel I believe, said, lawyers are the most reactionary people. Every man in his place. Be only a lawyer, ridicule the witnesses for the prosecution and the prosecutor. The most you may do is to compare the trial with a trial by jury in a free country, but don't touch on the convictions of the accused, don't dare say a word about what you think about these convictions; because you liberals, so far fail to understand those convictions, that even when you praise them, you cannot refrain from uttering banalities. Of course, this can be explained to the lawyers politely, mildly, compliantly, flexibly and cautiously. But the best thing is to fear the lawyers and not to trust them, *especially* when they say that they are Social-Democrats and members of the party (according to our Paragraph 1.)*

The question of taking part in a court investigation is determined, it seems to me, by the questions of the lawyer. Having a lawyer means to take part in the court investigation. Why not take part for the purpose of tripping up the witness and for agitation against the court? Of course, one must be very careful, that need hardly be said. It would be best of all to announce at once, *before* the court investigation starts, in reply to the first question put by the President: "I am a Social-Democrat and in my speech I shall tell you what this means. . . ."

* At the time Lenin wrote, this paragraph 1. of the Party Rules permitted membership to the Party to all those who declared their agreement with the Party programme and paid Party dues. The rule did not insist on the member performing active party work. The Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, fought against this rule on the ground that it opened the door of the party to all sorts of opportunist elements. A few months after this letter was written the Bolsheviks secured a majority and altered par. 1 in such a way as to restrict membership of the Party only to those who took an active part in its work.

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